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REPT. 99-483
Part 4

JOINT RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE NICARAGUAN DEMOCRATIC RESISTANCE REQUESTED BY THE PRESIDENT

MARCH 12, 1986.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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Mr. HAMILTON, from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, submitted the following

ADVERSE REPORT

[To accompany H.J. Res. 540, which on February 27, 1986, was referred jointly to the Committees on Appropriations, Foreign Affairs, and Armed Services, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, to whom was referred the bill (H.J. Res. 540) relating to Central America pursuant to the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, having considered the same, report adversely thereon and recommend the bill do not pass.

COMMITTEE ACTION

On February 27, House Joint Resolution 540 was introduced by the Honorable Robert Michel and referred jointly to the Committees on Appropriations, Foreign Affairs, and Armed Services, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. The Resolution would approve the request for additional authority and assistance for the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance made by the President on February 25, 1986, pursuant to the provisions of Section 722(p) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-83) and Section 106(a) of Chapter 5 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1985 (P.L. 99-88). These provisions provide for expedited consideration by the Congress of the President's request for additional authority and assistance to the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance.

The President's request would provide authority to transfer up to $100 million from accounts in the Department of Defense to appropriations available for assistance to the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance in six increments during Fiscal Years 1986 and 1987. Of

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the $100 million, $30 million would be available for continuation of the program of assistance presently administered by the Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office established by Executive Order 12530. Of the $30 million, $3 million would be used exclusively for the activities of the United Nicaraguan Opposition for the observance and advancement of human rights.

The President's request would, upon approval, "be deemed to satisfy the requirements, terms, and conditions" of various statutory provisions which restrict the ability of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, or other agencies or entities of the United States involved in intelligence activities to provide assistance to the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance. The approval of the Resolution would also be deemed to constitute Congressional acceptance of a statement of United States policy towards Nicaragua, which would be based upon Nicaragua's responsiveness to enumerated concerns, such as its ties to Cuba, the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, its build-up of military forces, its support for subversion and terrorism, its internal repression, and its refusal to negotiate in good faith the resolution of the conflict in Central America. Specifically, the United States will examine actions of the Nicaraguan government with regard to freedom of the press, religion and assembly, additional arms and foreign military personnel being introduced into Nicaragua, a cease-fire with the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance, and withholding support for insurgency and terrorism in other countries.

Finally, the Resolution would assert that United States activities pursuant to the Resolution would be "in accordance with international laws and treaties in force" but would not authorize the use of United States Armed Forces to engage in combat against the government of Nicaragua. The Resolution requires reports to the Congress every 90 days on actions taken to resolve conflict in Central America, including a detailed statement of progress on reaching a negotiated settlement, a detailed accounting of the disbursements made, and a discussion of human rights violations by the Nicaraguan Democratic Resistance and the government of Nicaragua.

On March 4, the Committee conducted a hearing in executive session to hear from Administration officials in support of House Joint Resolution 540. On March 5, the Committee met and, a quorum being present, ordered the Resolution reported adversely.

DISCUSSION

On May 13, 1983, the Committee filed a report to accompany H.R. 2760 of the 98th Congress, the so-called Boland-Zablocki bill. In the report, the Committee made some judgments concerning the involvement of the Nicaraguan government in the provision of support to the Salvadoran insurgency. The Committee made clear its view that Nicaragua was providing strong military support to this insurgency in concert with Cuba. Proponents of assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance have long quoted this section of the report as to ignore other key judgments made by the Committee in that report—that the policy of assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance was not working, that it was, in fact, counterproductive.

The report expanded on the provisions of H.R. 2760 which would have provided security assistance to friendly nations in the region to assist them in resisting the subversion sponsored by Nicaragua. The Administration and opponents of the bill said at the time that the amounts proposed for such assistance—$30 million in the first fiscal year, $50 million in the second—were wholly inadequate, that such a program would cost in the neighborhood of $100 million per year. The pending request of the President would transfer $100 million from Department of Defense accounts to accounts which will support the Nicaraguan resistance. Nor is $100 million the upper limit of assistance which may be provided if the President's request is approved. Administration witnesses have testified to the Committee that approval of H.J. Res. 540 would have the effect of removing any restriction upon use of the CIA's Reserve for Contingencies to provide assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance.[1] Thus, what was termed as an outrageous figure in terms of yearly assistance to friendly foreign countries in Central America—assistance which could have been used to provide for border patrols, such as those now being negotiated between Costa Rica and Nicaragua—has become an amount essential to maintain the military viability of a resistance with no present or forseeable capability to achieve a military victory in Nicaragua.

The 1983 report also noted that if it was unreasonable, as United States policy held then and holds today, to force the government of El Salvador to discuss power sharing with insurgents fighting a civil war—both because the government was elected and because the insurgents have no democratic base of support—it was no more reasonable to expect the government of Nicaragua to agree to such discussions with the Nicaraguan resistance. If it wouldn't work in El Salvador, why would it work in Nicaragua, the Committee asked. The question and its answer appear no different today than in 1983.

The Committee noted in 1983 that the program of assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance was not working and would not work because the pressure represented by the resistance had the opposite effect than it was meant to create. It hardened rather than softened the resistance of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. It produced results exactly opposite to those aimed for by the United States. There was an increase in Soviet influence, an increase in Cuban troops, an increase in Soviet and Warsaw Pact armaments, an increase in internal repression, and a decrease in the likelihood of fair elections.

In 1983, the Committee noted that U.S. negotiations, both bilateral and multilateral, had failed. The pressure represented by United States assistance to the resistance forces had not produced a satisfactory negotiating attitude on the part of the Nicaraguan government. Although the Committee did not say so at the time, it appears evident that this record of unsuccessful negotiations stemmed from the fact that the pressure tactics represented by aid to the resistance forces began at almost the same time as the nego-

[1] These same witnesses also confirmed that approval of the House Joint Resolution 540 would have the effect of removing any restraint now imposed by law upon DOD or United States intelligence assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance.

tiations. Military pressure represented by the resistance forces was initiated shortly after the beginning of such negotiations. Such pressure may not have worked because it never represented an alternative to negotiations.

In 1983, the Committee noted that the avowed purpose of the resistance forces was to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Administration witnesses noted at the time that the Administration did not have the goal to overthrow the government of Nicaragua but offered as evidence of this the fact that insufficient aid was being provided to accomplish such an end. The Committee judged at the time that it was, despite these statements to the contrary, the policy of the Administration to pursue the goal of military victory. The Administration's argument in 1986 is basically the same, although it is clear that it would welcome a military victory if it occurred. However, this argument is more difficult to sustain today in light of the size of the President's request, $100 million, plus the ability to spend additional sums to assist the Nicaraguan resistance.

The issue of providing assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance has been before the Congress ever since the Committee's report of April, 1983. Since that time, many of the judgments made by the Committee in that report have been buttressed by subsequent events. Today, the program of assistance proposed by the President for the Nicaraguan resistance is just as unlikely to succeed as the program proposed in 1983. It differs only in its size, in the number of resistance fighters proposed to be armed, and the intensity of warfare that will likely result if it is approved. Approval by the House of the President's request means a commitment to a force two or two and a half times its present size. The failure to demonstrate the capability to hold territory in Nicaragua notwithstanding, the resistance will be assisted in such a way as to put them in a position to hold territory in Nicaragua.

The Committee has found that, nearly three years after its 1983 report, the Administration is still murky in its explanation of goals for U.S. policy on Nicaragua. The resistance forces will be expected to hold territory and administer it. Yet, the Committee has been told the resistance forces will not be sufficiently strong to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. They will exert enough pressure only to force the Nicaraguan government to negotiate seriously with the Nicaraguan resistance.

This approach ignores intelligence assessments made since 1983 that the Sandinista government of Nicaragua is unlikely to agree to such negotiations for the simple reason that they would threaten the very basic structure by which it controls Nicaragua. The result will not be a Sandinista willingness to change the undemocratic nature of the regime, to expel Cuban troops, and shed Soviet support and influence. The result will be further repression, increased Cuban military presence and pervasive Soviet influence—all of which have been the Sandinistas' response to previous efforts to pressure them militarily. The expectation that the Sandinista government will change because of military pressure is not unlike other unrealistic or erratic explanation of Administration policy towards Nicaragua.

Originally, the Congress was told that United States support for the Nicaraguan resistance was for the purpose of interdicting arms going from Nicaragua to El Salvador. Years of fighting by the Nicaraguan resistance resulted in no appreciable diminution in the arms flow. The Secretary of State has said that the United States aim was not to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. The President said United States purpose was to make the Sandinistas "cry uncle." Frequently, Administration spokesmen have said our goal was victory. As often, they have said, their efforts were incapable of achieving that victory. This incoherent aspect of United States policy towards Nicaragua continues in the same vein that was evident in 1983. This is made clearest of all by the Administration's constant reiteration of the theme that the Sandinista government is lost to communism, that it is a Marxist-Leninist totalitarian regime. How, then, can the Nicaraguan resistance pressure the Sandinista government to negotiate away its total grip on power, when the Administration also tells us that communist regimes never give up the power they usurp?

The Committee has heard, as it did in 1983, that the program advanced by the President is supportive of the Contadora process and privately supported by many Latin American leaders. This is not an infrequent claim with respect to United States policy towards Nicaragua but it has yet to be sustained by any convincing evidence in support of such statements. What is evident to the Committee is that on the public record, Contadora and Central American leaders have distanced themselves from United States policy in supporting the resistance. This can be explained away only so many times as a traditional Latin American public relations front. The Committee does not accept this explanation. It believes that there is a genuine reluctance within the region and, specifically, among the Contadora countries and in key Central American countries, to see positive value coming from an increased level of fighting inside Nicaragua.

There are two reasons why Central American and Contadora leaders appear to have made this judgment. The first has to do with the Contadora process. As difficult as Nicaragua may have been in the negotiating sessions, its partners in this effort have been hard-pressed to ignore the foreign intervention in Nicaraguan affairs sponsored by the United States. United States efforts explained as support for Contadora are viewed with skepticism by these countries. They see Contadora as the poor stepchild of United States policy towards Central America, an effort largely ignored by the United States at key moments, when it has been used by the United States for its own purposes and not necessarily those of bringing peace to the region. The other reason that opposition has built in the region to additional aid to Nicaraguan resistance has been its failure on the battlefield. It remains today unable to directly confront Sandinista units of appreciable size.

Further, the improvements in the Nicaraguan military arsenal—its helicopter gunships, counterinsurgency battalions, artillery and mobility—make the prospects for future Nicaraguan resistance successes dim. Never having been able to seize territory, they are now expected by the Administration to seize and administer territory. The Nicaraguan resistance remains without a political infrastruc-

ture inside Nicaragua or a clear political message to give to the Nicaraguan people. It has never developed urban support. In fact, years of United States assistance has not produced an insurgency capable of sustaining itself among the population in Nicaragua.

The Committee contrasted the record of the Nicaraguan resistance with that of the Salvadoran insurgents. The latter have outside support but, if that support were cut off, could continue their fight. Although at the same or somewhat smaller size than the contras, they are a much more effective force. They have, at times, held significant amounts of territory and have even provided civil administration in parts of El Salvador. They are, in effect, a genuine home-grown insurgency, one which does have genuine roots in the economic and social conditions of El Salvador.

The Committee concluded that the Nicaraguan resistance is no more likely to defeat the Sandinista government than before. It is, in fact, less likely to do so. The Administration's policy of pressure has not worked and will not work in the future. In fact, the two times when Sandinista behavior has arguably changed in response to United States efforts, it hasn't been because of the Nicaraguan resistance. Once, in June 1983, when the fleet was first sent to Central American waters, Daniel Ortega reacted with a speech offering to drop previous Sandinista insistance on bilateral negotiations to resolve regional differences. This was a boost for the Contadora process. And, when American troops went into Grenada in October 1983, the Sandinista government responded with amnesty proposals and guarantees for the safety of United States citizens. That was the kind of pressure that had an effect on the Nicaraguan government but it has no relation to the proposal made by the President. That is because it was the prospect of the use of United States forces, not Nicaraguan resistance, which drew a reaction from the Sandinista government. It continues to be the assessment of the United States intelligence community, that only United States forces could truly resolve the conflict in Nicaragua on a military basis.

The Committee is deeply concerned that, as in the past, the Sandinista government of Nicaragua is clearly moving down the path away from democracy and pluralism. Its internal repression of the Church, the labor movement, political opposition parties, and many other forms of dissent and political activity are growing more concerted and effective. Private economic activity is being stifled. Other human rights violations are on the increase. The Committee has no confidence that additional resistance to the Nicaraguan resistance will produce the democracy the President seeks to achieve.

Press censorship, repression of the church, restriction on political activities will continue and perhaps increase. Military deliveries of newer, more modern weapons systems will continue. High numbers of youths will continue to be drafted into the military service. Cuban military presence may increase. Just as likely, Soviet influence and Nicaraguan economic dependency on the Soviet Union will be augmented. Those are very troubling trends for the United States. They are undoubtedly tragedies for Nicaragua. It is an unfortunate fact that continued and increased military pressure by the Nicaraguan resistance will not cause the Nicaraguan government to change either these policies or reassess their support for

the Salvadoran guerrillas. The resistance forces never slowed the flow of arms in the past. The requirements of the Salvadoran guerrillas today are such that no major flow of assistance is necessary. So, even with the increased military activity in Nicaragua, it is unlikely that the flow of assistance to the Salvadoran guerrillas will be greatly diminished.

The Committee's review of its conclusions in 1983 and the record of the Nicaraguan resistance since that time leads it to believe that the United States policy proposed by the President of an additional $100 million of assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance will not work It will, in fact, be counterproductive. The Committee does not make this decision lightly, for the problem represented by Nicaragua is a serious one. But, it is a problem not likely to be solved by the adoption of House Joint Resolution 540.

It is also the Committee's conclusion, based on nine years of general oversight of the CIA and five years of oversight of the CIA's activities in connection with Nicaragua that the CIA should not become further involved in paramilitary or military operations in Nicaragua.

The CIA was chartered to act principally as an intelligence collection and intelligence analysis organization. It performs best, and it serves the national interests best, when it confines its activities to these areas, or to covert activities that remain covert. The CIA's involvement in Nicaragua has demonstrated once again the inherent difficulties of conducting paramilitary covert action, has caused some to question the objectivity of its analytical reports, has created internal conflict and dissension, and has once again subjected the CIA and its dedicated and hardworking personnel to the agonizing glare of public discussion and criticism—all in pursuit of doubtful goals and based on shifting policies.

Finally, the Committee wishes to state the obvious: its vote in this matter is not a vote for communism or a vote for Soviet expansion into Central America. Rather, it is a vote against a failed policy. It is indeed unfortunate that the Administration has so dragged down the character of this Nation's public debate that the Committee must make such a statement.

COMMITTEE POSITION

On March 5, 1986, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a quorum being present, ordered the Resolution reported adversely by a recorded vote of 9 to 7.

OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

With respect to clause 2(l)(3)(A) of rule XI of the House of Representatives, the Committee's findings and recommendations concerning House Joint Resolution 540 are contained in the body of this report.

FISCAL YEAR COST PROJECTIONS

With respect to clause 2(l)(3)(B) of rule XI of the House of Representatives and Section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of

1974, the recommendation of the Committee would not have the effect of providing new budget authority or tax expenditures.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATE

With respect to clause 2(1)(3)(C) of rule XI of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received a letter from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office. The text of the letter follows:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, March 7, 1986.

Hon. LEE H. HAMILTON,
Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed H.J. Res. 540, a Joint Resolution relating to Central America pursuant to the International Security and Development Act of 1985.

The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence recommended that the resolution be rejected. This would involve no change to current law and, therefore, federal, state and local governments would incur no costs.

Should the Committee so desire, we would be pleased to provide further details on the cost estimate.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

RUDOLPH G. PENNER.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

With respect to clause 2(l)(3)(D) of rule XI of the House of Representatives, the Committee has not received a report from the Committee on Government Operations pertaining to the subject of this resolution.

INFLATION IMPACT STATEMENT

With respect to clause 2(l)(4) of rule XI of the House of Representatives, the recommendation of the Committee would not have an inflationary impact.

DISSENTING VIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVES STUMP, IRELAND, HYDE, CHENEY, LIVINGSTON, McEWEN, AND DANIEL

We fully support the President's request for assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance and urge our colleagues to vote for the Michel-Murtha Joint Resolution to approve the assistance (H.J. Res. 540). The prospects for a free and democratic Nicaragua depend directly upon the outcome of the House vote on the Resolution. A vote for the Resolution represents a commitment to a measured and effective response to Soviet-Cuban supported Sandinista repression of the Nicaraguan people and Sandinista subversion of freely elected governments in Central America. A vote against the Resolution represents abandonment of the Nicaraguan people to Marxist Sandinista totalitarianism and abandonment of the cornerstone principles of American foreign policy, freedom and democracy. The House of Representatives has reached the critical moment of decision upon which the future of Central America depends.

Summary of the President's Request

The President's Message to Congress of February 25, 1986 requests authority to transfer a total of $100 million from existing Department of Defense appropriations to provide assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance through fiscal year 1987. Of the $100 million for assistance, $30 million will be for continuation of the existing program of humanitarian assistance administered by the Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office. Of the $30 million for humanitarian assistance, $3 million will be earmarked for United Nicaraguan Opposition human rights programs. Because the President seeks authority only to use previously appropriated funds for aid to the resistance, enactment of House Joint Resolution 540 will not increase federal outlays or contribute to the federal deficit.

The President will report to Congress every 90 days on progress in negotiations, assistance funds disbursed, and alleged human rights violations. The funds transferred to Nicaraguan assistance will become available for obligation as follows: 25 percent upon enactment of the Joint Resolution approving the President's request and 15 percent upon submission by the President of each of five 90-day reports to Congress. In the event of a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Central America, any balance remaining from the $100 million will be available for relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction in Central American countries, including Nicaragua. By approval of the request, Congress accepts that United States policy towards Nicaragua depends upon Nicaragua's responsiveness on the issues of Nicaragua's military ties to Cuba, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries; Nicaragua's disproportionate military

buildup; Nicaragua's export of armed subversion and terrorism; Nicaragua's internal repression; and Nicaragua's refusal to negotiate in good faith and enter into a Church-mediated national dialogue. Approval of the President's request does not constitute authorization for any member or unit of the United States Armed Forces to engage in combat against the Government of Nicaragua.

Diplomacy and Support for the Resistance Go Hand-in-Hand

The President has asked the Congress to approve a transfer of $100 million in previously appropriated DOD funds to provide aid to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance. Without such aid, no realistic possibility will remain for diplomatic resolution of the conflict in Central America.

Diplomacy is not of itself a foreign policy objective. It is a means for achieving foreign policy objectives. The degree of success in achieving foreign policy objectives through diplomacy depends upon the correlation of political, military, economic, and social forces which constitute the setting for diplomacy.

Diplomacy and support for the Nicaraguan resistance go hand-in-hand. Some opponents of the President's Nicaragua policy have attempted to convince the American people that the country faces a choice between two mutually exclusive alternatives: either diplomacy or support for the resistance. They imply that those who truly believe in diplomacy shun support for the resistance and rely exclusively on speeches exchanged by diplomats, and that anyone who supports the resistance cannot believe in diplomatic resolution of the conflict. Nothing could be further from the truth.

No one gets something for nothing in negotiations. If the United States cuts the Nicaraguan democratic resistance off at the knees, the Sandinistas will have achieved precisely what they want from the United States. They will have no incentive to negotiate a solution to the problems in Central America because they will have achieved exactly the solution they want—liquidation of their only effective opposition in Nicaragua, courtesy of the Congress of the United States.

Support for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance is not an alternative to a diplomatic solution, it is an essential precondition for the diplomatic solution. United States support for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance provides the incentive to the Sandinistas to engage in external diplomacy through the Contadora process and internal diplomacy through a Church-mediated dialogue between the Sandinistas and the opposition.

The failure of the United States Congress to provide consistent, effective support to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance accounts in large part for the lack of success in diplomatic efforts to date. Renewed full support for the Nicaraguan resistance will provide leverage essential for persuading the Sandinistas to negotiate in good faith toward achieving the objectives which the United States, its allies in the region, and the Contadora nations have identified as essential elements for resolution of the conflict in Central America.

Our objectives have remained constant. For the past five years the United States has sought to convince the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua to:

—end its military and security ties to Cuba, the Soviet Union, and other Warsaw Pact countries, including the presence in Nicaragua of military and security personnel of those countries;
—reduce its military and security forces to a level consistent with its defensive needs;
—end its support for armed subversion and terrorism directed against other countries;
—end internal repression of the Nicaraguan people;
—begin negotiation in good faith for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Central America based upon comprehensive implementation of the September 1983 Contadora Document of Objectives;
—begin the process of national reconciliation by entering into a Church-mediated dialogue with the opposition; and
—observe basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right of free election of democratic government.

The United States has made extraordinary diplomatic efforts to engage the Sandinistas in processes leading to achievement of these objectives. In the Minority Views contained in House Report 99–106, part 1, on the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1986, we set forth in detail the substantial efforts of the United States from 1979 through the Spring of 1985 to seek a diplomatic solution to the situation in Nicaragua. The United States has continued its efforts.

Throughout the Summer of 1985 the United States continued to support the efforts of the Contadora Group (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela) and of the Contadora Support Group (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay). In addition to supporting Contadora efforts, the United States also maintained direct diplomatic contracts with Nicaragua. The Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs and officials of the National Security Council met at various times with the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States.

In late October 1985, the President's Special Envoy for Central America, Ambassador Harry Shlaudeman, met in Washington with the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the United States and made clear that the United States would engage in further bilateral talks with the Sandinistas if the Sandinistas would agree to a cease-fire and engage in a Church-mediated dialogue with the Nicaraguan opposition. Nicaragua rejected the offer.

In October and November, 1985, the Contadora Group foreign ministers and the foreign ministers of the five Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua) held several rounds of talks on a third draft of the Contadora agreement for peace in the region. In addition, the United States and the Soviet Union held experts' talks on Central America and the Caribbean on October 31 and November 1, 1985 in Washington.

On December 3, 1985, Nicaraguan President Ortega sought suspension of Contadora Negotiations until May 1986. Notwithstanding Nicaragua's suspension effort, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States voted 25 to 1—the lone negative vote being that of Nicaragua—to approve a resolution that urged con-

tinuation of the Contadora process. Nicaragua refused to resume the Contadora talks.

On January 12, 1986 the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group and Contadora Support Group, meeting at Caraballeda, Venezuela, issued a joint statement intended to help get the Contadora process moving again, which the five Central American states endorsed on January 15, 1986 in the "Declaration of Guatemala."

On February 14 and 15th, 1986, the Contadora Group held another negotiating session with the Central American countries. Although Nicaragua sent a representative, Nicaragua refused to address the issues remaining to be resolved in the third draft Contadora agreement.

The United States has made every effort to support negotiations among the countries in the region to achieve a just, lasting, and verifiable peace in Central America.

One central, critical fact makes such a diplomatic outcome unlikely to occur if the current situation continues. The Sandinistas have no incentive to negotiate as long as they believe that the United States Congress may give them their central objective—elimination of an effective Nicaraguan opposition—on a silver platter by cutting off aid to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance, thereby allowing the Sandinistas by force of arms to crush the opposition or drive them from Nicaragua. Once the Sandinistas eliminate their internal opposition, no obstacle will face them in completing their efforts to consolidate a Marxist totalitarian regime in Nicaragua and to export it to neighboring countries.

The Sandinistas cannot achieve their objectives alone. They must have the help of the Congress of the United States to eliminate the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.

Members of Congress have no convenient middle ground—they cannot avoid or ignore the issue. They face a clear choice between approving the President's request for aid to the resistance, thereby preserving the chance for a free democratic future for Nicaragua, or rejecting the President's request, thereby helping the Sandinistas to eliminate their democratic opposition, dooming the people of Nicaragua to a totalitarian future.

If the Congress approves aid to the resistance, the Sandinistas will have an incentive to participate in good faith in negotiations, both through a Church-mediated internal dialogue with the opposition and through the Contadora process with the countries of the region. Without approval of the aid, they will have no incentive to negotiate. Successful diplomacy depends upon approving aid to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.

The Interests of the United States and the Nations in the Region Require Support for the Nicaraguan Resistance

The security of the United States and its allies remains the central foreign policy objective of the United States in Central America. For two decades, Cuba, backed by the Soviet Union, has constituted the clearest direct threat to United States interests in Latin American and the Caribbean. Soviet-Cuban efforts to advance Communism in the Western hemisphere have succeeded in establishing—in Nicaragua—the first solid Communist foothold on the

mainland of the Americas. The close military and political alliance of Nicaragua with the Soviet Union and Cuba, Nicaragua's unwarranted buildup of military power, and Nicaragua's continuing efforts to subvert democratically elected governments of neighboring countries constitute a grave threat to freedom and democracy in Central America.

In addition to maintaining the security of the region, the United States has a fundamental interest in the advancement of democracy, fundamental freedoms, and economic opportunity in the region. The principle of self-determination through free democratic elections has made substantial advances in Latin America in recent years. In Central America, Nicaragua alone shows a trend toward state centralism and elimination of individual human rights and political liberties. Moreover, the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua has engaged ceaselessly in efforts to subvert the governments of neighboring countries. Left unchecked, the Sandinistas will redouble their efforts to advance Communism beyond its beachhead in Nicaragua to neighboring countries. The gains democracy and freedom have made in the region, and the economic progress made with substantial amounts of U.S. aid, would be swept away. The Nicaraguan democratic resistance constitutes the only check keeping the Sandinistas tied down inside Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan resistance fights not only for the freedom of the people of Nicaragua—it fights for the freedom of all the peoples of Central America.

The United States also has direct strategic interests at risk in Central America. The Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan axis bisecting the Western Hemisphere poses a long-term direct threat to the national security of the United States. The maritime traffic of the Caribbean Sea and the Panama Canal hauls two-thirds of America's foreign trade and petroleum. Half the materiel needed to supply the Allied Powers in Europe in the event of a Warsaw Pact attack in the Central European Theater would transit the Caribbean. New ports and airbases in Nicaragua would enhance substantially Soviet capabilities for projecting military power in the Western Hemisphere. Soviet reconnaissance aircraft flying from Nicaragua could spy on important parts of the United States, including critical defense, space and intelligence facilities on our West Coast. The United States cannot tolerate a substantial expansion of the air and naval power of the Soviet Union and Soviet-proxy states in Central America.

The United States faces a choice of making a relatively small investment now in the freedom of Nicaragua or making a large investment—both in blood and in treasure—in the future. The investment of $100 million now to aid the Nicaraguan resistance ties down the Sandinistas inside Nicaragua, pressures the Sandinistas to engage in good faith in internal negotiations with the opposition and external negotiations in the Contadora process, and limits the damage to long-term United States interests in the region.

Failure to make the investment now in the Nicaraguan resistance will ensure consolidation of Marxist Sandinista totalitarianism in Nicaragua; eliminate any possibility for a diplomatic solution leading to a just, lasting and verifiable peace in Nicaragua; and doom Central America to eventual regional conflagration. In-

stead of United States taxpayers giving manageable amounts of tax dollars now to support the resistance, they would in the future ultimately be giving large amounts of tax dollars and, more importantly, their sons' and daughters' lives to defend the United States and liberate Central America. A vote to reject today's investment in the Nicaraguan resistance is a vote to mortgage the future of our grandchildren, avoiding expenditure of tax dollars now on Nicaragua, but forfeiting American lives in wars of future decades.

Conclusion: Support the Nicaraguan Resistance

Under Soviet-Cuban tutelage, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua have become masters of despotic state centralism, suppression of dissent, and Communist expansionism through wars of national enslavement masquerading as "wars of national liberation." The Sandinistas have flagrantly violated the rights of the Nicaraguan people—both by eliminating their fundamental freedoms and by committing atrocities against them. The Sandinistas have aligned themselves closely with the major Communist nations and adopted their police-state tactics. The Sandinistas have violated the security of other nations in the region by an unwarranted military buildup and by support for subversion of governments in the region.

As a result of its internal repression and external subversion, the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, which stole the Nicaraguan revolution after elements representing a broad political spectrum rose up against Somoza, has no claim to legitimacy and has lost the support of the Nicaraguan people. As the Congress of the United States has declared:

> . . . the Government of Nicaragua has lost the support of virtually all independent sectors of Nicaraguan society who initially supported the removal of the Somoza regime (including democratic political parties of the left, center, and right; the leadership of the Church; free unions; and the business, farmer, and professional sectors) and who still seek democracy, reject the rule of the Frente Sandinista, and seek the free elections promised in 1979. . . . [Section 722(c)(3), International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-83) (August 8, 1985)]

The chance of a free and democratic future for the Nicaraguan people lies with the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.

The President's request for aid for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance remains the wisest choice. The United States seeks freedom and democracy for all of Central America. The Soviets, Cubans, and Nicaraguans seek the opposite. If the Communists prevail in the opening political and military skirmishes in Central America, the United States eventually will be forced to arm its southern border and to act directly with the United States Armed Forces to protect the security interests of the United States and its allies. The interests of the United States in freedom and democracy in Central America, in a diplomatic solution to the problems of the region, and in avoidance of U.S. military entanglement require approval of the President's request for aid to the resistance.

We urge our colleagues in the House of Representatives to vote for the Michel-Murtha Joint Resolution (House Joint Resolution 540) to approve the President's request for assistance to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance.

BOB STUMP.
ANDY IRELAND.
HENRY J. HYDE.
DICK CHENEY.
BOB LIVINGSTON.
BOB MCEWEN.
DAN DANIEL.

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